The Constitutional Convention of 1787

By: Josh Brown

One of the greatest events in American history was the Constitutional Convention of 1787. During this gathering in Philadelphia our United States Constitution was created. The original purpose of the Constitutional Convention was to make changes to the Articles of Confederation. The delegates ended up creating the new Constitution to take the place of the Articles of Confederation. Over two hundred years later we still live under the same Constitution.

All of the states sent delegates to the Constitutional Convention except for Rhode Island, who did not attend the Convention because they thought that the changes that would be made to the Articles of Confederation would hurt them. Of the many important things that the Constitution changed, the change in the design of the government was the most important. They changed the government from a unicameral (one house) to a bicameral legislature. A bicameral legislature is where there are two houses to make the laws. They also gave the government three branches. These were the legislative branch, the executive branch, and the judicial branch.

The Great Compromise was also done during the Constitutional Convention of 1787 in Philadelphia. The delegates were trying to figure out which plan they should use to determine how many representatives each state would have in each branch of the government, the New Jersey plan or the Virginia plan. The larger states wanted the Virginia plan because it meant that the amount of representatives was based on population. The New Jersey plan was the other way around, it said that they should have the same amount of representatives from each state, no matter what the population. So they decided to take a vote. It took them a while to reach a final decision, but in the end they chose the Great Compromise plan that combined the Virginia and New Jersey plans. So the House representatives are based on population and the Senate representatives are equal for each state.

Georgia sent four delegates to the convention. Georgia went to the Convention wanting to have all the slaves included in the voting population so they would have more representation, and the also went for equal votes. They wanted equal votes because the larger states had more people which meant more representation, which meant more delegates for voting. In the end Georgia got the Three-Fifths Compromise. The Three-Fifths Compromise is where Georgia could only count three out of every five slaves toward representation. The reason they could only count three out of the five slaves is because back then Georgia had a lot of slaves and the other states knew that, so if Georgia counted all of their slaves they would have more representation than the larger states. So the states decided that Georgia could only count three out of every five slaves.

The four representatives that Georgia sent to the Constitutional Convention were William Pierce, William Houston, William Few, and Abraham Baldwin. Only two of the representatives that Georgia sent to the Convention actually signed the Constitution. Those men were William Few and Abraham Baldwin. William Few was a self educated man. Through the years he proved his knowledge for leadership and won a lieutenant-colonelcy in the dragoons. Then later he joined politics. Abraham Baldwin was a chaplain in the continental army until 1779. For several years he studied the law then finally in 1783 he gained admittance to the bar at Fairfield, Connecticut. A year later he moved to Georgia and continued working in the law. In the year 1787 he returned to the Continental Congress until 1789, when he was elected into the United States Congress where he served for around eighteen years. At first, Georgia wasn’t so sure about the new Constitution, however, they ended up deciding that they would ratify it. They ratified it on September 28th, 1787.

So in the end of the Constitutional Convention they made the United States a new Constitution. They also did a lot more, they got rid of the Articles of Confederation, they made the government bicameral, and along with that they gave the government the three branches, as well as many other things. Not all of the delegates agreed with everything in the Constitution, and they agreed that a Bill of Rights was needed, but they worked together and compromised to complete the Constitution and have it ratified by the states. A lot of thinking and planning went into making the Constitution. I am glad the 55 men who made this Constitution did such a great job that it still remains today.

Citations

Google- America’s founding fathers

En.wikipedia.org/wiki/constitutional/\_convention\_(United\_States)

Notes from Ms. Barber